

REMARKS

Claims 21-23 and 25 are pending in the present application. Claims 21-23 and 25 have been amended. Claims 20 and 24 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 20 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by the Rice et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 4,510,465).

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant respectfully notes the Examiner's acknowledgment that claims 21-23 and 25 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In view of the Examiner's acknowledgment of allowable subject matter, claims 21, 23 and 25 have been amended to be in independent form. This amendment has been made merely to advance prosecution of this application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge that claims 21-23 and 25 are allowed.

Conclusion

As noted above, the claims have been amended directly responsive to the Examiner's acknowledgment of allowable subject matter, rather than to further distinguish over any of the relied upon prior art. Particularly, claims 21, 23 and 25 have

been amended to be in independent form. Accordingly, this Amendment should not be construed as narrowing scope within the meaning of *Festo*.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the corresponding rejection, and to pass the claims of the present application to issue, for at least the above reasons.

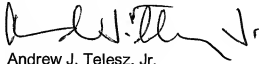
In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, please contact Andrew J. Telesz, Jr. (Reg. No. 33,581) at (571) 283-0720 in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss these matters.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicant hereby petitions for an extension of one (1) month to May 31, 2007, for the period in which to file a response to the outstanding Office Action. The required fee of \$120.00 should be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment for any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

Respectfully submitted,

VOLENTINE & WHITT, P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew J. Telesz, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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